



Introduction

“We, the Indians of the Pacific Northwest, recognize that our fisheries are a basic and important natural resource and of vital concern to the Indians of this state, and that the conservation of this natural resource is dependent upon effective and progressive management. We further believe that by unity of action, we can best accomplish these things, not only for the benefit of our own people, but for all of the people of the Pacific Northwest.”

*– Preamble to the
NWIFC Constitution*

The Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission was created in 1974 by the treaty Indian tribes in western Washington as a result of the *U.S. vs. Washington* litigation that affirmed fishing rights reserved by the tribes in treaties signed with the federal government in the 1850s.

The commission’s role is to assist the tribes in conducting biologically sound fisheries and to provide member tribes with a single, unified voice on fisheries management and conservation issues. Member tribes are: Hoh, Nisqually, Squaxin Island, Puyallup, Jamestown S’Klallam, Port Gamble S’Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Skokomish, Swinomish, Sauk-Suiattle, Upper Skagit, Tulalip, Makah, Stillaguamish, Muckleshoot, Suquamish, Nooksack, Lummi, Quinault and Quileute.

The tribes select commissioners who develop policy and provide direction to NWIFC staff. The commissioners elect a chairman, vice-chairman and treasurer. The commission’s executive director supervises the staff that implements the policies and fisheries management activities approved by the commissioners. The NWIFC employs about 65 full-time employees in its Administration, Fishery Services, Habitat Services, and Information and Education Services divisions.

FY 05 In Review

Ongoing salmon recovery efforts, implementation of a federal government mandate requiring the mass marking of salmon produced in federally funded tribal hatcheries and development of an approach to address tribal water rights were among many important issues addressed by the treaty tribes and their Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission in FY 05. In addition, a new executive director was selected to guide the NWIFC.

Wild Salmon Recovery: A Shared Strategy

The Shared Strategy is a bottom-up collaborative approach to wild salmon recovery that links ongoing wild salmon recovery initiatives at the tribal, state, federal and local levels to create a plan that is viable and cost-effective.

After nearly six years of collaborative efforts, a recovery plan for listed Puget Sound chinook that meets ESA requirements has been delivered to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the federal agency charged with implementing the ESA. The endorsement and participation of NMFS in the Shared Strategy process has been critical to its success.

Work is under way now to develop a financing approach to implement the plan.

Hatchery Reform Project

The Puget Sound and Coastal Washington Hatchery Reform Project, a systematic, science-driven examination of how hatcheries can help recover and conserve naturally spawning salmon populations and support sustainable fisheries.

In FY 05, the tribal, state and federal co-managers continued implementing more than 1,000 recommendations—from changes in hatchery practices to modification of facilities—developed by an independent Hatchery Reform science panel as part of the effort.

Mass Marking

Tribal and state co-managers also worked during FY 05 to implement federal legislation requiring the mass marking of all fish produced from federally-funded hatcheries. Mass marking, in which hatchery-raised fish are fin-clipped for identification, enables fishermen to selectively harvest only hatchery salmon, while releasing unmarked wild salmon.

A new automatic clipping and tagging trailer was acquired with federal funding sought by U.S. Rep. Norm Dicks (D-WA) to implement the mass marking mandate. The trailer increases the speed of fin clipping, and because it needs fewer personnel, makes the process of marking fish more affordable to tribes.

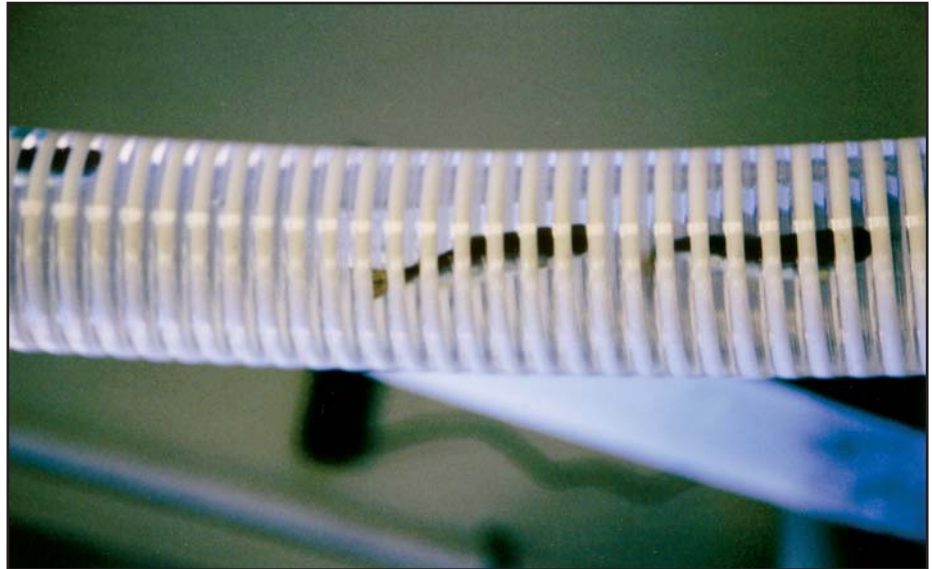
Water Resources

Water issues continued to be a focus of tribal and NWIFC activities during FY 05.

In western Washington, disputes over water for fish and water for growth are exacerbated by rapid population growth, land use change and shifting climate patterns. Tribes are evaluating, planning for and working to maintain adequate water supplies for their fish and homelands.

For more than three decades, the western Washington Tribes have pursued a number of administrative, cooperative, voluntary and inter-governmental approaches to define and establish the instream flows necessary to protect and restore salmon resources.

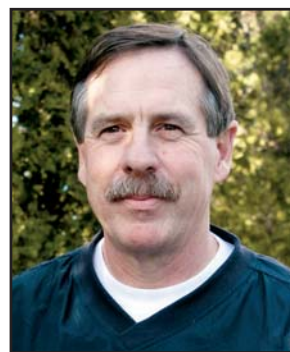
In October 2005 tribes gathered for their fourth Water Summit to discuss the status of the water resource and further their action agenda to secure and stabilize



Young salmon are pumped through a tube into a new automatic tagging and fin-clipping trailer that is aiding salmon management.

that treaty reserved resource. This annual gathering has been central to communicating a common awareness of issues and coordinating an implementation strategy. This year discussion centered on the magnitude of potential impacts from global warming and the critical need to engage state-of-the-art water conservation efforts to address these impacts.

New NWIFC Executive Director



Mike Grayum

After more than 20 years, a change of leadership occurred at the NWIFC in FY 05. Jim Anderson retired in February 2005. He was replaced by long-time NWIFC employee Mike Grayum, who previously served as the head of the Fishery Services Division. Grayum has been with the NWIFC for 29 years and was among the first employees hired by the organization following the *U.S. vs. Washington* ruling that upheld the tribes' treaty-reserved salmon rights and established the tribes as co-managers of the resource with the State of Washington.

FY 05 Activities Summary

Following is a synopsis of NWIFC activities during FY 05:

Fishery Services

Fishery Management And Planning Division

The primary objective of the Fishery Management and Planning Division is to provide technical assistance and coordination to member tribes in their annual and long-range fishery management planning activities. Activities included:

- Long range planning, wild salmon recovery efforts and Endangered Species Act implementation;
- Development of pre-season fishing agreements;
- Development of pre-season and in-season run size forecasts;
- In-season fisheries monitoring; and
- Post-season fishery analysis and reporting.

Quantitative Services Division

The Quantitative Services Division's objective is to assist tribal fishery management programs by providing relevant data, quantitative tools and analyses, and technical consulting services to tribal and NWIFC projects. Activities included:

- Administering and coordinating the Treaty Indian Catch Monitoring Program;
- Providing statistical consulting services;
- Conducting data analysis of fisheries studies and developing study designs; and
- Updating and evaluating fishery management statistical models and databases.

Enhancement Services Division

The Enhancement Services Division provides tribal support services in enhancement planning, hatchery coordination, coded wire tagging, and fish health. Activities included:

- Coded wire tagging of 4 million fish at tribal hatcheries to provide information critical to fisheries management;
- Providing genetic, ecological, and statistical consulting for tribal hatchery programs; and
- Providing fish health services to tribal hatcheries.

U.S./Canada Pacific

Salmon Treaty Implementation

The Pacific Salmon Treaty of 1985 provides for tribal representation at all levels of the Pacific Salmon Commission, which implements the treaty. NWIFC staff are involved in many aspects of the treaty's implementation. Activities included:

- Facilitating inter-tribal and inter-agency meetings, developing issue papers and negotiation options;
- Serving on the Fraser sockeye and pink, chum, coho, chinook, and data sharing technical committees, as well as other work groups and panels; and
- Coordinating tribal research and data gathering activities associated with implementation of the Pacific Salmon Committee.

Habitat Services

The Habitat Services Division provides coordination, representation and technical assistance to member tribes on fish habitat and other environmental issues. The division monitors these issues and acts as an information clearinghouse. Activities included:

- Coordinating policy and technical level discussion between tribes and federal, state and local governments, and other interested parties;
- Coordinating, representing and monitoring tribal interests in the Timber/Fish/Wildlife process, Coordinated Tribal Water Quality and Ambient Monitoring programs; and
- Implementing the Salmon and Steelhead Habitat Inventory and Assessment Project.

Information And Education Services

The Information and Education Services Division provides comprehensive public relations and educational service to member tribes.

Activities included:

- Producing news releases, newsletters, brochures, reports, curricula, videos, photographs, exhibits and maintaining a Web site to educate the public about tribal natural resource management activities and objectives;
- Producing newsletters, background papers and other materials;
- Responding to hundreds of public requests for information about the tribes and their tribal natural resource management activities; and
- Monitoring legislation and coordinating tribal input.



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